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SUBJECT: SOUGHIR TERRORISM TRIAL ENDS IN STIFF SENTENCES

¶1. (U) A Belgian court convicted Bilal Soughir and five other men January 10 under Belgium's 2003 antiterrorism law. The six were on trial for abetting the recruitment and training of terrorists for suicide attacks in Iraq, including Muriel Degauque, a Belgian national who in 2005 blew herself up in a suicide bomb attack in Iraq that targeted U.S. forces. The court imposed stiff sentences on five out of the six suspects, ranging from 28 months to ten years, with one defendant receiving a suspended sentence. The leader of the cell, Bilal Soughir, received a maximum sentence of 10 years and remains in police custody. Some defendants are expected to appeal the verdict.

¶2. (SBU) Comment: Belgian counterterrorism officials consider the verdict and stiff sentences a significant success in their ongoing counterterrorism efforts. U.S.-Belgian cooperation was at the forefront, with various U.S. agencies dealing with counterterrorism cooperating with Belgium's prosecution of the case.

FOX